DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 419 890 UD 032 367

TITLE	How To Help Kids Be Sensible, Safe, and Secure. Six Parenting Skills Help Prevent Alcohol/Drug Use and Violence. Good News for Parents Who Worry about Their Kids. Special Report.
INSTITUTION	Johnson Inst., Minneapolis, MN.
PUB DATE	1997-00-00
NOTE	16p.
AVAILABLE FROM	Johnson Institute, QVS, Inc., 7205 Ohms Lane, Suite 200, Minneapolis, MN 55439-2159; phone: 800-231-5165 or 612-831-1630; e-mail: info@johnsoninstitute.com
PUB TYPE	Reports - Descriptive (141)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Adolescents; *Child Rearing; Communication (Thought Transfer); *Conflict Resolution; *Discipline; Empowerment; Parent Child Relationship; Parent Education; *Parenting Skills; Prevention; *Safety

ABSTRACT

To help parents learn the six skills that help children avoid drug abuse and voilence, the Johnson Institute has also developed a video-based package titled "Parenting for Prevention: How To Help Kids Be Sensible, Safe, and Secure." This report draws on the Institute's research on violence by and against children and adolescents to present the six parenting skills. These common sense, well-tested skills, are: (1) "how to stop enabling and start empowering kids"; (2) "how to set limits for kids"; (3) "how to enforce consequences when kids violate limits"; (4) "communicating, and how to confront kids when they are doing wrong; how to encourage them when they are doing right"; (5) "how to teach kids to handle anger without violence"; and (6) "how to teach kids to resolve conflicts without violence." The steps to implement each skill are outlined. (SLD)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED 419 890

SPECIAL REPORT

How to Help Kids Be Sensible, Safe, and Secure

Six Parenting Skills Help Prevent Alcohol/Drug Use and Violence

Good News for Parents Who Worry About Their Kids

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Dee Stuart
Johnson Institute

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

JOHNSON INSTITUTE®
7205 Ohms Lane
Minneapolis, MN 55439-2159
(800) 231-5165
Email: info@johnsoninstitute.com

UD032367

This Special Report contains important information about six parenting skills that help kids think and act sensibly and safely. To help parents learn these skills, the Johnson Institute has developed a complete video-based package called *Parenting for Prevention: How to Help Kids Be Sensible, Safe, and Secure*. For more information, call 800-231-5165.

Copyright©1997 Johnson Institute—QVS, Inc. All rights reserved.
Materials may be duplicated for instruction purposes only by permission of copyright holder.

Johnson Institute—QVS, Inc.
7205 Ohms Lane, Suite 200
Minneapolis, MN 55439-2159
(800) 231-5165 or (612) 831-1630
Email: info@johnsoninstitute.com

How to Help Kids Be Sensible, Safe, and Secure

The problem of youth violence is a big worry today. If you're a parent and you worry about your child's safety at school or on the street, you've good reason to be concerned. Every two days, guns kill the equivalent of a class of 25 youngsters and injure 60 more.[1] In 1993, more than 3 million violent acts took place on or near public school grounds. That's 16,000 incidents of violence every school day—a violent incident every 6 seconds.

Our children are worried, too. A 1993 national survey asked 65,000 kids in grades 6-12 about violence in schools. The results are alarming:[2]

- 37% of students do not feel safe in school—nearly double the number from a similar survey taken just four years earlier in 1989.
- 50% know of someone who switched schools to feel safer.
- 25% of the girls and 49% of the boys have been physically assaulted at school.
- 55% of those in grades 10-12 say they know that guns and other weapons are in their schools.
- 70% say that violence is often caused by "stupid things like bumping into someone."
- 47% say that teachers spend half their class time disciplining students.
- 63% say that they would learn more if they felt safer at school.
- 81% report that they would be happier in general if they felt safer at school.

As if the rise in violence were not enough, alcohol and other drug use by youth is also on the increase, after a decade of declining use. In its annual survey of junior and senior high school students, the National Parents' Resource Institute on Drug Education (PRIDE) reported significant increases in teenage alcohol and other drug use as compared to the previous year. A recent, broad-based national survey conducted by the University of Michigan discovered that a substantial number of eighth graders who have begun to use so-called "gateway drugs" (alcohol, tobacco, etc.), are now at high risk for harder drug use.[3] Despite the decade of declining drug use between 1979 and 1991, young people in the U.S. between the ages of ten and eighteen show a level of alcohol and other drug use that is greater than any other industrialized nation in the world.

Why are so many kids drinking and using other drugs today? Who or what is to blame? Adults tend to blame *outside* sources—schools, media, peer groups, etc. Kids, on the other hand, explain their use by pointing *inward*—curiosity, desire for thrills, etc. In other words, they say

---

[1] According to the Children's Defense Fund, reported in "Standing Up to Violence" (Kappan Special Report), by R. Craig Sautter. *Phi Delta Kappan*, January, 1995.

[2] From the written responses of 65,193 students in grades 6 through 12 who responded individually or as classes to a questionnaire printed in *USA Weekend*, April 23-25, 1993, and in *Classline Today* teaching plan, distributed by the National Association of Secondary School Principals.

[3] From the *National Survey on Drug Use by Youth* conducted by the University of Michigan Institute for Social Research for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, May, 1996.

it's a personal choice. While there's no denying the power of outside influences, attributing kids' decisions to drink and use other drugs entirely to outside forces is not only inaccurate but dangerous. It implies that our kids are merely helpless pawns in the grip of uncontrollable forces—a presumption kids pick up on and use as a rationale for unacceptable and risky behavior. Research confirms kids' claims that they make *free, personal choices* about using alcohol and other drugs. In fact, although peers *do* sometimes affect kids' choices about drinking and using, what actually influences their decision the *most* is whether or not their parents have a "no-use" limit (rule) on alcohol and other drugs.[4]

But what about violence? We know that children and adolescents are exploding in anger and aggression with unprecedented intensity and frequency. In the past, angry conflicts among young people may have resulted in pushing, shoving, or yelling. Today, it's not unusual for young people to express their anger or settle disputes by using—or threatening to use—dangerous weapons, all in the name of "saving face" or "getting respect."

In addition, many parents by their example are unwittingly teaching their kids to act violently. Many parents are so frustrated or overworked or financially stretched that they have little time to calmly address the needs of their children. As a consequence, these parents—usually without meaning to—exemplify or model violence to their children by exploding at them or by emotionally or physically abusing them.

Likewise, it's becoming more and more clear that kids today don't know how to handle feelings of anger by using words to talk them out. Instead, they act out those feelings with fists or weapons. They don't know how to walk away from an argument or fight. They don't know how to back off and sort out their true feelings before they act. They don't know how to resolve conflicts by negotiating, compromising, or talking things through. And what they don't know is hurting them—and hurting others. It seems that far too many kids only know how to *react*—violently, quickly, and without thinking.

Johnson Institute's research on violence produced a new and disturbing finding: the reason violence by and against kids is happening more and more often in school, on the street, and at home is because many kids feel **entitled** to act violently. They think it's perfectly normal to use violence to express anger, to settle a disagreement, or simply to get what they want. This attitude of feeling **entitled** to act violently persists among kids because adults **tolerate** it. Kids ignore adult warnings against violent behavior because many parents, teachers, and other adults either ignore such behavior or allow them to get away with it by shielding them from the consequences. As a result of such **tolerance**, too many kids think—and think *wrongly*—that using violence is okay and is okay with adults.[5]

---

[4] For more information, read *Alcohol Is a Drug, Too. What Happens to Kids When We're Afraid to Say No.* David J. Wilmes (Minneapolis: Johnson Institute, 1993). See Resources list at the end of this guide.

[5] For more information about entitlement, tolerance, and youth violence, read *Respect & Protect: A Practical, Step-by-Step Violence Prevention and Intervention Program for Schools and Communities*, Remboldt and Zimman (Minneapolis; Johnson Institute, 1995). See Resources list at the end of this guide.

What can parents and other concerned adults do? First, adults must give children unequivocal **no-use** rules about alcohol, other drugs, and violence. Kids need to learn that these behaviors won't be tolerated and that consequences will follow any violation. Second, parents can and must act to shape their children's attitudes and behaviors before alcohol, other drugs, or violence become their automatic answer to dealing with the problems of life.

To help parents and other concerned adults accomplish these important tasks, the Johnson Institute has developed this six-part video series called *Parenting for Prevention: How to Help Kids Be Sensible, Safe, and Secure*. This self-help video series teaches six powerful parenting skills that not only help keep kids safe from alcohol, other drugs, *and* violence, but also help them feel safe and secure enough to make sensible decisions about everything they do.

Parenting for Prevention: How to Help Kids Be Sensible, Safe, and Secure comprises six 15-minute videos that teach parents the following skills:

- How to Stop Enabling and Start Empowering Kids
- How to Set Limits for Kids
- How to Enforce Consequences When Kids Violate Limits
- Communicating: How to Confront Kids When They're Doing Wrong; How to Encourage Kids When They're Doing Right
- How to Teach Kids to Handle Anger Without Violence
- How to Teach Kids to Resolve Conflicts Without Violence

Each of the six skills reflects Johnson Institute's long experience with effective prevention and intervention methods and strategies. They are a common sense, well-tested set of skills that develop well-balanced kids, who deal more effectively with life's challenges and threats. This is not a quick fix, not a magic formula, not a one-minute-a-day program that promises effortless, painless solutions to the complex problems of parenting in an alcohol/drug and violence prone culture. Rather, like a physical wellness program, these six skills work day after day, year after year, to build strong minds and characters—able to withstand the stresses and strains of life—the best prevention there is.

Because the skills are presented in a lively video form, busy parents can learn them without the hassle of complicated or time-consuming programs or books. Simply watching these videos carefully will give parents new insights into today's most troublesome parenting problems, as well as practical skills for handling them.

Each video comes with a brief companion booklet that summarizes and reinforces the skill presented and taught in the video. (Additional copies of the booklets can be ordered in quantities at a discount.) In addition, each video comes with a Facilitator's Guide for conducting group sessions or discussions. The Exercise Sheets and Information Sheets contained in the Facilitator's Guides can be reproduced for use in the group sessions or as handouts for parents to take home and use with the videos.

Parenting for Prevention is not directed to children, but to their parents and other caretakers. Even so, the six skills it promotes and teaches are driven by the needs, aspirations, and promise of children. Children need clear, consistent guidance and help from parents if they are to meet their needs, achieve their aspirations, and fulfill their promise. That's why the overriding goal of *Parenting for Prevention* is to provide children with the very best of opportunities to grow into mature, responsible, nonviolent, and drug-free adults. It's never too early and never too late for parents to help their children develop the life skills that make for a productive and happy life. The parenting skills offered by *Parenting for Prevention* are as applicable to toddlers as they are to teens, as crucial to the family that's just beginning as they are to the family that thinks it's too late.

Parenting for Prevention is designed to be used by parents, grandparents, single parents, foster parents, parents of blended families, educators, mentors, family and parent/child specialists, counselors, and any other professional who works with children or parents. The video series can be viewed at home by individual parents or in group education or training sessions such as

- "brown bag" or formal parent/training sessions for employees in business and industry
- parent education classes conducted by schools, colleges, universities, or adult education centers
- parent training sessions conducted by churches, synagogues, community centers
- family or parent education programs conducted by hospitals, chemical dependence treatment centers, behavioral or mental health centers, community counseling centers, women's centers, community prevention centers
- parent training sessions conducted by correctional institutions, domestic violence centers, or women's shelters
- parent training sessions conducted by day-care or child-care centers

Each video of *Parenting for Prevention* has its own session plan for use with groups. Each plan stands on its own, so if you facilitate the viewing of a single video you may safely use that plan independently of the others. However, if you are leading a group for viewing all six videos, *Optional Reviews* and *Dismissals* built into the plans will allow you to link all six sessions together.

Each plan includes a list of materials you will need to prepare for the session as well as step-by-step directions for facilitating the session itself. Each plan also includes at least one Exercise Sheet and an Information Sheet to be reproduced and distributed to the participants as indicated in the plans. Be sure to preview each video and read through each session plan carefully before gathering with the participants.

Parenting Skill One: How to Stop Enabling and Start Empowering Kids

Enabling: Any parental action that unwittingly

- allows and encourages children to be irresponsible
- prevents children from learning how to function effectively in the real world

We enable our children

- by protecting them from the consequences of their choices
- by taking over their responsibilities
- by keeping secrets instead of working as a team
- by giving in to avoid complaints or hassles
- by accepting excuses instead of enforcing consequences

Empowering: Any parental action that

- encourages children to be responsible for their choices
- provides sound information about the world in which they live
- provides opportunities to practice life skills that help them act sensibly so they'll be safe and feel secure

We empower our children

- by giving them clear, consistent messages about what we expect of them and why we're holding them accountable
- by letting them learn from their mistakes and experience the consequences of their choices
- by encouraging them to make a contribution to the family
- by working as a team to set limits and enforce consequences

Parenting Skill Two: How to Set Limits for Kids

Limits need to be:

- clear
- reasonable
- set in advance

Clear limits are:

- written down
- posted where all can see them

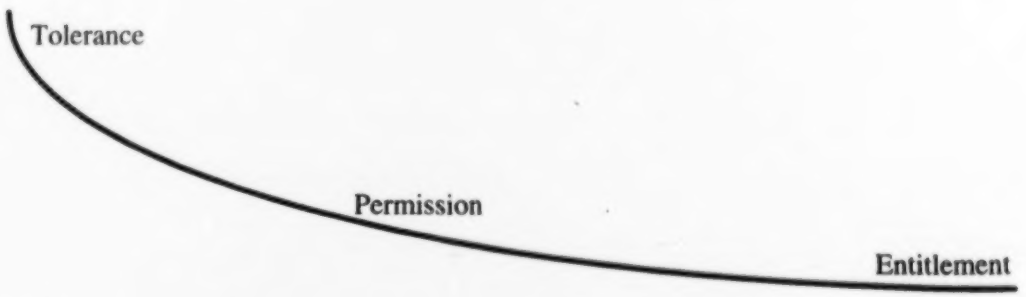
Reasonable limits are sensitive to

- the child's age
- the child's needs
- the child's growing sense of responsibility

Parental pitfalls to setting limits

- equating love with trust
- poor role modeling
- failing to agree
- failing to check compliance

Responding when kids test limits: avoiding the slippery slope



Parenting Skill Three:
How to Enforce Consequences When Kids Violate Limits

Consequences versus punishment

- The goal of consequences is education.
- The goal of punishment is retribution.

Consequences are the natural or logical results of making inappropriate or bad choices.

- Natural consequences happen naturally and are fairly predictable (if you stand in the rain, you get wet).
- Logical consequences are prearranged by society (if you violate the speed limit, you get a ticket and pay a fine).

Criteria for consequences

- related to (flow logically from) the violation
- reasonable and set in advance
- consistent
- increase in force

Pitfalls to avoid

- revenge seeking
- self-punishment
- threats and promises
- shaming

Enforcing the "spirit" of consequences

- calmly
- respectfully
- without anger

Parenting Skill Four:
Communicating: How to Confront Kids When They're Doing Wrong—How to Encourage Kids When They're Doing Right

Avoid ineffective communication

- *The Drill Sergeant*—demands submission, threatens, puts down, ridicules, uses sarcasm. "Don't you argue with me—just do as you're told."
- *The Prosecuting Attorney*—cross-examines to get the facts. "Did you study for the exam? How long? When? Where? Why didn't you look up those words in the dictionary?"
- *The Egomaniac*—talks only about self and what interests him, doesn't listen. "You think you've got it tough, but when I was a kid, I had to ..."
- *The Comedian*—takes the focus off the real problem by making jokes to cover up feelings. "Well, at least you didn't murder anyone, ha-ha!" Uses humorous sarcasm to demean. "You look like a monkey in that outfit."
- *The Psychiatrist*—analyzes, diagnoses, and prescribes solutions that leave the child feeling helpless and vulnerable. "You're wearing your hair like that because you have some deep-seated need to embarrass your father and me."
- *The Avoider*—switches topics to avoid uncomfortable, painful or threatening information. "Okay, you think you may be failing math—but what I really want to know is when are you going to mow the lawn?"

Use effective communication

Be an active listener. Hear your child's message and give verbal and nonverbal feedback by

1. *Asking appropriate questions.* "Did you say Larry was driving the car when the accident happened?"
2. *Clarifying the message.* "Do you mean Larry tried to slow down but couldn't?"
3. *Using eye contact* (looking directly at the child) and *appropriate facial expression* (interest, empathy, humor, concern).
4. *Giving verbal encouragement.* "I see; I understand; tell me more."
5. *Listening for what is **not** being said and helping the child to bring underlying feelings to the surface.* Watching for nonverbal clues such as
    - facial expression (frowning, grinning)
    - gestures (wringing the hands, clenched fists, jiggling feet)
    - posture (slumped, upright, closed, open)
    - skin color (pale, flushed)
    - breathing (shallow, rapid, or heavy)
    - tone of voice (low, loud, anxious)

Know how to confront negative behavior by using DESI

D **Describe** the behavior. ("Tommy, you didn't make your bed this morning.")
E **Express** how you feel using an "I-statement." ("I feel disappointed because you agreed to do it every morning before you leave for school.")
S **Suggest** a new behavior and what you expect the child to do. ("You'll need to turn off the TV now and make your bed.")
I **Involve** yourself; offer a helpful suggestion when warranted. ("I'll be up to check your bed in ten minutes." "I can show you an easy way to do it if you want.")

Know how to encourage positive behavior by using DEE

D **Describe** the behavior. ("Tommy, you did a wonderful job making your bed.")
E **Express** how you feel using an "I-statement." ("I'm proud of the way you made it look—the bed looks great.")
E **Encourage** future behavior. ("It sure is helpful when you do your part around the house.")

Parenting Skill Five:
How to Teach Kids to Handle Anger Without Violence

A-B-C-D steps to handle anger appropriately

A—AWARE

B—BACK OFF

C—CHECK OUT CHOICES AND CONSEQUENCES

D—DECIDE AND DO

A—AWARE
Be aware of signs that you're getting angry.

B—BACK OFF
Take time to cool down and sort out what's wrong and what you're really feeling.

C—CHECK OUT CHOICES AND CONSEQUENCES
Think of the choices you have for handling your anger and the consequences of each choice.

D—DECIDE AND DO
Decide which choice is safest for everyone, and do it!

"I-Statements" can help with our A-B-C-D's

I-Statements	*You-Statements*
• build up	• put down
• tell how I feel	• blame another for how I feel

"I feel _____ when _____."

Examples *" I feel angry when you call me names."*
"I feel angry when you blame me for something I didn't do."

Parenting Skill Six:
How to Teach Kids to Resolve Conflicts Without Violence

Conflict: A clash between people who hold sharply opposite and different views, ideas, or opinions.

THE THREE-T'S METHOD OF CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Step 1: Think About It.

- Who am I having a conflict with?
- What's the conflict about?
- What's my part in the conflict?

Step 2: Talk About It.

- *Tell* the other person your side of the conflict and how you feel about it. Use *I-statements* not *YOU-statements*. I-statements build up. YOU-statements put down. An I-statement tells how I feel. ("I feel angry when you don't keep your promises.") A YOU-statement blames the other person. ("You never keep your promises.")
- *Ask* the other person to give his or her side of the conflict. ("How do you see it, and how do you feel about it?") Pay attention and don't interrupt.
- *Listen* to what the person says and repeat it back to him or her.

Step 3: Try to Work It Out.

- *Tell* the other person what you want to happen.
- *Ask* the other person what he or she wants to happen.
- *Be willing to compromise*. If you can't compromise, "agree to disagree" for now or agree to discuss it again later.

UNSAFE CONFLICTS

Johnson Institute Resources for Preventing Alcohol/Drug Use and Violence

Publications

Parenting for Prevention: How to Raise a Child to Say No to Alcohol/Drugs. A Guide for Parents, Teachers, and Other Concerned Adults (Book), Order #P071.

Parenting for Prevention: How to Help Kids Be Sensible, Safe, and Secure. Six Booklets for Preventing Alcohol/Drug Use and Violence. (For Parents, Teachers, and Other Caregivers.)

How to Stop Enabling and Start Empowering Kids, Order #P679.
How to Set Limits for Kids, Order #P678.
How to Enforce Consequences When Kids Violate Limits, Order #P677.
Communicating: How to Confront Kids When They're Doing Wrong; How to Encourage Kids When They're Doing Right, Order #P676.
How to Teach Your Kids to Handle Anger Without Violence, Order #P579.
How to Teach Kids to Resolve Conflicts Without Violence, Order #P580.

Choices & Consequences: What To Do When a Teenager Uses Alcohol/Drugs: Advice for Parents, Teachers, and Other Concerned Adults (Book), Order #P096.

Alcohol Is a Drug, Too. What Happens to Kids When We're Afraid to Say No (Book). Order #P231.

You Can Make a Difference: Characteristics and Skills of the Effective Prevention Teacher (Book), Order #P181.

Parenting for Prevention: A Parent Training Curriculum (Manual), Order #P072TK.

Respect & Protect: A Practical, Step-By-Step Violence Prevention and Intervention Program for Schools and Communities (Manual), Order #P404.

StudentView:® A Prevention Program Effectiveness Survey, Grades 6-12 (Evaluation Tool), Order #P165.

Solving Alcohol/Drug Problems in Your School (Booklet), Order #P081.

Enabling in the School Setting (Booklet), Order #P082.

Solving Violence Problems in Your School: Why a Systematic Approach is Necessary (Booklet), Order #P336.

Violence in Schools: The Enabling Factor (Booklet), Order #P337.

Bully/Victim Conflict (Booklet), Order #P577.

Resources for Parenting: Booklets for Teaching Specific Life Skills to Children

A Job Description for Parents, Order #P007-1.
A Job Description for Kids, Order #P007-2.
Helping Kids Be Responsible for Themselves, Order #P007-9.
Helping Kids Communicate, Order #P007-4.
Helping Kids Handle Anger Without Violence, Order #P007-13.
Helping Kids Resolve Conflicts Without Violence, Order #P007-14.

Resources for Parenting: Booklets for Teaching Specific Life Skills to Children (continued)

Helping Kids Understand Their Feelings, Order #P007-3.
Helping Kids Learn Refusal Skills, Order #P007-5.
Is Your Child Involved with Alcohol and Other Drugs?, Order #P007-6.
Helping Kids Make Decisions, Order #P007-7.
Helping Kids Feel Good About Themselves, Order #P007-8.
Avoiding Power Plays with Kids, Order #P007-10.
Facts About Kids' Use of Alcohol or Other Drugs, Order #P007-11.

Videos/Films

Parenting for Prevention: How to Help Kids Be Sensible, Safe, and Secure. A Six-Part Animated Video Series for Preventing Alcohol/Drug Use and Violence. (For Parents, Teachers, and Other Caregivers.)

Video One: How to Stop Enabling and Start Empowering Kids, Order #V498.
Video Two: How to Set Limits for Kids, Order #V499.
Video Three: How to Enforce Consequences When Kids Violate Limits, Order #V500.
Video Four: Communicating: How to Confront Kids When They're Doing Wrong; How to Encourage Kids When They're Doing Right, Order #V501.
Video Five: How to Teach Your Kids to Handle Anger Without Violence, Order #V502.
Video Six: How to Teach Kids to Resolve Conflicts Without Violence, Order #V503.
Complete Set of Six Videos plus Program Materials, Order #V504.

Helping Kids Prevent Violence. A Two-Part Video Discussion Program for Elementary and Middle Schools.

Video One: Anger! Handle It Before It Handles You, Order #V450.
Video Two: Conflict: Think About It, Talk About It, Try To Work It Out, Order #V451.
Complete Set of Two Videos plus Program Materials, Order #V457Kit.

Respect & Protect: A Solution to Violence in Our Schools and Communities, Order #V460.

Choices & Consequences: Intervention with Youth in Trouble with Alcohol/Drugs, Order #V400.

Good Intentions, Bad Results: Preventing Teenage Enabling and Chemical Use, Order #V440.

To order any of these materials, call the Johnson Institute toll-free.
Be sure to ask for a free copy of our complete catalog.

Johnson Institute—QVS, Inc.
7205 Ohms Lane
Minneapolis, MN 55439-2159
(800) 231-5165
Email: info@johnsoninstitute.com